Institutional Program Review – Reviewer's Report

Bachelor of Science in
Digital Arts and Design
College of Arts and Sciences
Dakota State University

September 2018

Reviewer: Dave Beck, Associate Dean and Director, School of Art & Design, University of Wisconsin-Stout

PART 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

First and foremost, the reviewer would like to thank everyone at Dakota State University (DSU), with special recognition for the exceptional efforts of Ryan English and Wendy Romero in preparing for and hosting the site visit. The Self-Study Program Review was exceptionally well organized, readable, comprehensive, and effective. All on-site arrangements were on schedule. The reviewer felt he was treated exceptionally well throughout, and all requests for information were handled in a timely, professional, and courteous fashion. The reviewer offers sincere thanks for service above and beyond the call of duty. While on campus, the reviewer had thorough tours of campus facilities and met with: Provost McKay, Arts and Sciences Dean Jones, Assessment Director Kahl and multiple Digital Arts and Design (DAD) faculty and students.

In summary, the reviewer believes that the DAD Bachelor of Science (BS) is at a crossroads. Challenges lie ahead for this unique program, and – just like it might have been 12 years ago at the inception of the DAD BS – the faculty and university have some very important decisions to make to assure the continued success of this unique program at DSU and in the state of South Dakota.

The reviewer observed positive elements to the program, such as dedicated faculty, a unique mission (both the program's mission, and how it fit within the university's), and the legacy of what the program was in its formative years. But with those positive observations, also came items of concern. The current degree structure and requirements, coupled with serious facilities issues, is of highest concern. Additionally, the lack of collaboration – both amongst disciplines and amongst faculty – was obvious and troubling.

In this report, the reviewer has tried to be as thorough, objective, and honest as possible, but does want to remind the reader that this is all based upon only a few sources of reference:
- The 42-page Self-Study Program Review (and Appendices), published and available online, as of Fall 2018 (https://public-info.dsu.edu/academic-program-reviews/digital-arts-and-design-b-s/)
- Time spent on the website (https://dsu.edu/) and referencing a few supplementary documents, such as schedules, plans of study, and degree requirements.
- The nine hours spent on the campus of Dakota State University on 9/17/18, visiting facilities and speaking with about 25 individuals. This resulted in roughly 30 pages of hand-written notes, quotes, and observations.

PART 2: SCHEDULE OF ON-SITE VISIT

Dakota State University
College of Arts and Sciences
BS Digital Arts & Design
Institutional Program Review

Sunday, September 16
Arrive in Madison, SD
Hotel Reservations at AmericInn (504 10th Street, SE) in Madison.

Monday, September 17

7:45 am	Pick up at Motel - Ryan English, Digital Arts & Design
9:00 am	Dr. McKay, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (President's Conference Room)
9:30 am	Dr. Ben Jones, Dean of Arts and Sciences (President's Conference Room)
10:00am	Dr. Jay Kahl, Director of Assessment (President's Conference Room)
10:30-12	Tour and conversation Digital Arts & Design faculty Wendy Romero, DAD Coordinator, Ryan English DAD faculty
12:00-1:00	Lunch with DAD Faculty (Marketplace)
1:00-1:45	Conversations with DAD Students (Habeger Science Center 133)
1:45-3:45	Conversations with DAD Faculty (Habeger Science Center 133)
3:45-4:15	Open time- prep for exit interview (Habeger Science Center 133)
4:15-5:00	Exit interview with Dr. McKay, Dr. Jones, Wendy Romero, Ryan English (Habeger Science Center 133)

Tuesday, September 18
Depart Madison, SD

PART 3: PROGRAM EVALUATION, ORGANIZED BY FOCUS AREAS FOR REVIEW

Program goals and strategic planning
- appropriateness of goals and whether / not goals are being met
- Program goals relative to institutional mission
- Program goals relative to current national trends and forecasts for the discipline

According to the conversations with faculty and administration, and reading the self-study, the following program goals have been observed:

Curricular Revisions and Implementation. This is a significant goal for the DAD, and their accomplishment of initiating and implementing some of this already, is to be commended. The additions and updates to the "DAD Core" (45 credits that are shared by all four specializations) appears to have a nice balance between foundations, technical skill, technology, and theory/history. However, beyond the shared core, it is the reviewer's opinion that the additional 45 credits for each specialization (on top of the previously mentioned 45-credit core) reflect four programs that appear to be far too large, specific, and demanding for a typical Bachelor of Science. While relative to the institutional mission of incorporating technology, it may be too lofty a demand for current students. This issue is expanded upon in the later section regarding curriculum.

Selective Admissions. Due to high enrollment numbers, the DAD has begun to consider selective admissions. There are many positive outcomes that align with selective admissions (portfolio submissions and reviews), and the investigation into this process would not only play into the institution's future interest in becoming more selective, but also help to control and balance enrollment numbers amongst the four specializations. This issue is expanded upon in the later section regarding enrollment. In this same space concerns the goal of *raising Sound Design and Film specialization numbers*, which will hopefully be supported through a managed enrollment program as stated earlier.

National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) accreditation. While a lofty goal, it is commended that the institution wishes to seek this stamp of certification. Aligning with the university's desire to encourage programmatic accreditation and most definitely a national trend for art and design programs, this issue is expanded upon in the later section regarding assessment and accreditation.

Program resources
- Effective use of resources to meet program goals
- Faculty -- staffing levels and credentials

- Classroom facilities
- Laboratory facilities and equipment
- Financial support

This section will involve a relatively deep dive into specific areas observed while visiting the university. After reading the self-study, speaking with various administrators, faculty, and students – and personally touring the spaces at DSU – the following has been observed:

The structure of "departments" at DSU is quite interesting. Instead of actual departments, the College seems to serve as a "super department", with the Dean being the direct supervisor of all faculty and staff. A "program coordinator" serves as the curricular manager (often called a "Program Director" at other institutions) for each specific program, such as DAD. It is unclear as to which position – or another position entirely – is responsible for budgets involving classroom equipment, supplies, capital improvements, recruiting costs, promotions, marketing, etc. Overall, the resources (which are implied in this section as being faculty, facilities, equipment, and other forms of financial support) appear to be doing an adequate job at supporting goals of the program but could benefit from some fee adjustments to keep the various areas balanced in support (which will be expanded upon later).

In the area of faculty staffing levels and credentials, there appeared to be enough faculty in relation to the number of students in the DAD BS. Their credentials and areas of expertise as outlined in the vitae were also acceptable. After the visit, the reviewer did have concern about who might be teaching the new art history courses required for the DAD major, and if that person held the credentials to do so. The 2019-2020 schedule of courses with assigned faculty (provided via email to the reviewer) listed "Adjunct Faculty" next to both ARTH 211 and ARTH 212 (the newly required Art History courses for the program).

Some concern was raised when there was mention of weighting certain classes differently, based on enrollment. For instance, if the typical load for a full-time DAD faculty member is three studio (lab) classes each semester, that equates to roughly 15 hours of in-class presence and work (it should be noted that pg. 15 of the self-study states that "the majority of courses prefixed by ART, ARTD, and DAD are studio type courses, which meet for 6 contact hours per week", yet the reviewer noted that on the DAD Plans of Study and provided schedules, only 5 contact hours per week are listed). But it was observed during the visit, that multiple faculty members had additional course obligations, amounting to four or five different studio classes they were

responsible for (due to a few them being enrolled with under 10 people), resulting in roughly 20-25 hours of in-class presence and work. This is not a practice that the university should be supporting, as this not only creates a culture of imbalance and resentment amongst faculty, but has the potential to lead to burn-out and would not be in compliance for nearly any accrediting body, to this reviewer's knowledge.

Additionally, it was observed that the "Program Coordinator" position received a stipend for their work in the capacity of the position (including summer), but no reassigned time. This is of concern, especially due to this position being a unique blend between a department chair and program director, thus being responsible for the advisement/recruitment of the DAD students (typical program director duty), but also the organization and coordination of the DAD faculty (typical department chair duty). Especially for a coordinator of a program as large as DAD's, this should be investigated.

Regarding classroom/laboratory facilities and equipment, the reviewer had the chance to tour all facilities used by DAD faculty and students, which spread across multiple buildings around campus. The findings regarding laboratory facilities and equipment accounts for one of the largest areas of concern in the self-study and site-visit review. After reading the self-study, speaking with various administrators, faculty, and students – and personally touring the spaces at DSU – the following has been observed:

The DAD facilities are scattered across the entire campus, leaving what appears to be a fractured program that is unable to collaborate and does not feel as one "community", both in feedback from the faculty and the student bodies. For a major that is as large as DAD is on campus, and assumedly important to the university because of that, this was very surprising to the reviewer. Having disciplines in different buildings around campus appears to severely impact the potential for success of this program. Until this is remedied, it is feared that there will be continued frustration amongst the faculty and student bodies about the inability to collaborate or feel "respected" by the university. Multiple faculty and student comments reflected this notion of feeling like "second class citizens" in comparison to the Cyber and Computer Science programs, regarding allocation of resources and facilities. With the DAD program being responsible for literally one in ten of the in-person students currently on campus, the University should be looking to better demonstrate its commitment to supporting the program's future success as a contributor to the campus culture and enrollment.

One area where the campus had obviously supported the DAD BS was through computers in the labs. The Animation Lab in Beacom and the two Mac Labs in Beadle were well-maintained and appeared to have industry standard software and hardware. It

is the observation of the reviewer that while DSU has done well to support these computer-heavy areas, that perhaps the campus has not realized the importance of equally supporting all DAD disciplines. On two different occasions, it was mentioned in passing by faculty that each of the four DAD program specializations was originally meant to have space in Beacom, but then all specializations except for Production Animation were removed from the plans at the last minute. If this is indeed the case, that is likely part of the contributing factor to the resentment – and feeling of not being valued – that the DAD faculty and students feel towards the larger university. Further examples and detail are found below in program-specific facilities observations.

Foundations: The reviewer visited a drawing classroom, 2D design classroom, all-purpose foundations classroom, and a 3D design workshop, all in Beadle Hall. While the first three rooms listed were acceptable – with proper surfaces, space, equipment, furniture, and storage for projects, the 3D design workshop was woefully unacceptable. The kiln was sitting out in the open, in the main work room (lacking fireproof doors in the room as well as lacking what appeared to have proper exhaust) and that same room had a box fan blowing out the window to act as the room's ventilation system. The woodshop, consisting of various older tools that did not all appear to be in working or safe order, was in a large storage closet with no dust collection system and felt very cramped (and thus again, unsafe). There was also a presence of pink foam, likely being used as materials for projects, which is common to find in art programs. Foam dust/particulate is highly toxic to inhale, and thus requires up-to-code ventilation (of which no ventilation currently exists in the space). Due to the extreme importance of this facility serving as the sole three-dimensional foundation to the entire almost-200-student DAD curriculum, it is recommended that the university take immediate action to rectify the safety and equipment in these rooms before using them further.

Computer Graphics: The Computer Graphics specialization appears to utilize one of the Mac labs in Beadle Hall, which was well kept and organized. With additional cutting stations and printers for larger work, it appears to serve sufficiently for this specialization.

Photography: The photography area in Beadle Hall was well taken care of, with obvious thought that went into the design and layout of the space. In addition to what appeared to be an ample and working darkroom, there was an area for students to gather, work, and critique that seemed to be popular with students as a place to not only make work, but network as part of a community of artists and designers.

Digital Sound Design: The reviewer toured the facilities in Tunheim Hall, which housed the Digital Sound Design Studios. While the ability to creatively repurpose space was appreciated, this area felt very under supported by the university. With studios crammed into two different odd shaped, elongated spaces – neither of which are meant for sound design studios or classrooms – it should be a priority of the university to consider investing in a dedicated space for this specialization. In conversations with the Provost, there appears to be plans for the renovation of a new space in another building (Dakota Prairie Playhouse). While this would be a positive addition to the specialization's area, there are two caveats: a) many faculty are doubtful this would happen, due to previously mentioned issues with university promises for space to be dedicated to DAD, only to then fall through and b) this would continue to keep the DAD program spread across campus in different silos, stifling potential creativity and collaboration.

Film and Cinematic Arts: The reviewer saw the Film and Cinematic Arts studio in Beadle Hall's 3rd floor, as well as the computer lab used by the program on the 2nd floor. While the computer lab appeared sufficient, the studio itself did not. It was an empty room with no specialized equipment to speak of, concerning a lighting grid, permanent painted green screen, cameras, soundproofing, editing bays, or other necessary items for a production studio. While it was mentioned that some equipment could be checked out from the program, and other equipment was available at the library, students in the program expressed frustration about the lack of industry-standard equipment available to them (light kits, production kits, up to date cameras, etc.), and that many of them had no choice but to invest hundreds of dollars in to personal equipment on their own. Due to the very low enrollment numbers for this specialization – and the traditionally expensive costs of keeping equipment up to date for a program of this nature – it is recommended that the university look closely at how it will support facilities and equipment for this area in the future.

Production Animation: The reviewer toured the animation lab in Beacom Hall, and – as noted above – was impressed with the computers and setup in the room. It did appear that some basic – yet crucial – software was still missing from computers, even five weeks into the semester, according to both the faculty and students. One minor issue was that the large lab space in Beacom has so many computers (30) that it could have the potential to negatively affect class sizes. Studio classes should never get much above 20-24 students, especially for technically intensive areas like Animation. Due to the room being quite large for a typical computer lab, it is suggested that five to six computers be considered for removal, to accommodate other equipment that is used in animation classes, such as light tables, a rostrum, and perhaps space for recording quick reference videos.

Concerning financial support, there still appears to be a great deal of improvement to be made in both the efficiency and distribution of how the above resources are allocated. For instance, the reviewer noted that the FY19 additional fees for ART courses amount to $15.25 per credit hour and the FY19 additional fees for DAD and ARTD courses amount to $57.15 per credit hour. This large difference in cost per credit hour is concerning, especially given the DAD mission describing that the "strength of our program is derived by our emphasis on foundations…"

Perhaps not necessarily in "financial support", one final area of Program Resources to touch on is how the various programs at DSU are promoted to the region. The reviewer noted that the website of DSU – including the program-specific pages – appeared to lack the visual and aesthetic impact that lends itself to recruiting students interested in the visual medium of Digital Arts and Design. It is suggested that additional resources be dedicated towards the promotion of programs such as DAD to the region. This could take the form of several approaches, such as embedding current DAD students in to the DSU marketing office, embedding YouTube/Vimeo Channels into the program page (to show off animations, films, sound, etc.), and even just a simple slideshow gallery of student work on the website. If the university's agreement with the external web design template doesn't allow this, some sort of adjustment should be made to allowing the program to have off-site hosting and linking from the page (i.e.: link to a YouTube/Vimeo or Gallery page somewhere else). This sort of promotion – as well as the integration of social media – is pertinent to recruiting visually oriented young adults who are interested in creative careers.

Additionally, some affordable adjustments could be made on-campus as well. In addition to the art gallery that is set to be completed on the 2nd floor of the library, the university should consider other methods of disseminating DAD student work to the campus. The installation of a few large monitors with speakers in key spots on campus - dedicated to solely highlight DAD student work - would demonstrate the university's commitment to the program, while also helping the campus to better understand what the DAD program does, and how others on campus might collaborate with them.

Program curriculum
This section will involve a relatively deep dive into program curriculum. After reading the self-study and speaking with various administrators, faculty, and students the following has been observed:

The current curriculum for the DAD BS (all specializations) appears to require far too many courses for a typical bachelor's degree (BS or BA). Typically, according to NASAD standards, a liberal arts degree – such as a BS/BA in Art (or any related art/design degree) - suggests that 30–45% of the total course credit toward the degree is required to be in the creation and study of the visual arts or design (see NASAD Standards IV.C). From a cursory glance of the DAD BS, *at least 60% of the required courses for the degree would fall under art and design-related classes, requiring almost two times the amount of courses necessary for a typical BS*. Furthermore, upon looking at the eight-semester "Plan of Study" (POS) sequence for each program, there are multiple points in the students' career in which they are asked to take a disproportionately large amount of studio classes. It is recommended to never require a student to take more than three studio classes in one semester, due to their extended (double) length as compared to other classes on campus (for instance, the Production Animation POS suggests students take *five* studio courses in their third semester, which equates to roughly *25 hours spent in class each week*). There is reason to believe by the reviewer that this rigorous schedule and degree might be a reason for low retention and graduation rates within the DAD program.

While one reaction might be to consider transforming the DAD BS into a BFA, this reviewer does not suggest that avenue be pursued. The current facilities, curriculum, graduation rates, student work outcomes, and university structure fit far better with a BS than a BFA at this time.

The specializations of the DAD BS are potentially problematic. In the reviewer's observation, the specializations are contributing to a few different problem areas within the DAD. These include:

- *Faculty, students, and facilities are in distinct curricular and physical silos*. The separate specializations have caused disciplines to find themselves scattered across campus, taking the faculty and students with those said disciplines. The DAD BS does not feel as collaborative as it has the potential to be, due to this issue.

- *There is an excessive number of classes needing to be taught each semester*. With so many specializations – and specialized courses for those specializations – the need to offer so many different unique courses (while keeping students on track to graduate) is placing an unnecessary pressure on the faculty workload. The number of classes offered and available in the program appear like that of a program that has two to three times the number

of students and faculty that DAD has.

- *Students are being trained for specialized disciplines that might not be necessary for the needs of the regional industry*. In speaking with students, almost all of them agreed that the specializations were not helpful, as many of them were planning to seek opportunities in the region that look for more general skillsets.

- *The specializations also appear to have their own counterparts as academic minors on campus.* This duplication of efforts creates the need for additional courses to be offered by an already small area. For instance, listed below is a table that demonstrates the DAD major and specializations, along with minors that look to be nearly identical in name/offering:

DAD BS Major Specializations	DAD-related Minors
Computer Graphics Specialization	Computer Graphics Minor
Digital Sound Design Specialization	Audio Production Minor
Film & Cinematic Arts Specialization	Film Production Minor
Production Animation Specialization	Production Animation 2D Minor
	Production Animation 3D Minor

Technology integration

In line with the mission of the University, the DAD successfully integrates technology in nearly all classes that it offers. With "Digital" being in the title of the program, prospective students are immediately aware of what they will be engaging with upon arrival at the university. With that said, the reviewer noticed that DSU's definition of "technology" should also learn to incorporate other definitions of the word, much like the DAD mission implies. The world of art and design is no stranger to technology – the paint knife, printing press, and kiln were all at one time considered "advanced technology", and it would behoove the DAD program to begin referring to this in conversations with administration, recruiting opportunities, and perhaps even the DAD culture of students and faculty in general. The reviewer noted on more than one occasion that the students felt their education in "traditional art" was "a waste of time" in their digital program. It is suggested that the faculty consider reviewing the traditional

ART foundations curriculum, so that a consistent message about its application and prelude to digital media is apparent – and in fact necessary.

Program assessment
- Appropriateness of assessment measures / activities for the discipline
- Major-field assessment activities, relative to the program goals
- Program accreditation, if appropriate

The reviewer was impressed with the metrics that were provided in the self-study and appreciates the work that the assessment office has done in guiding the DAD faculty towards a new form of assessment for the major. As discussed with the Assessment Director, qualitative methods of assessment are often much more commonly found in the art/design fields, than quantitative, due to the visual nature of the medium being assessed. Because of this, opportunities for mid-program review/assessment and post-graduation review/assessment – both surrounding portfolio samples by students – is an acceptable approach. Additionally, instructor assessment – in the form of classroom observations and student evaluations – are common forms (while the reviewer did not see those in the self-study, it is assumed that these are part of the institutional practice for instructor evaluations).

It was noted by the reviewer that on page 35 of the self-study, one of the *Programmatic Outcomes* listed was "Graduates will have a requisite *mastery* over necessary design theory and Skills". Due to the nature of an undergraduate bachelor's program such as this one, the word "mastery" may not be wholly appropriate, as that is often attributed to a degree that is more professional - or advanced - in nature, such as a graduate degree.

The fact that pre, mid, and post assessment methods were mentioned as potential approaches for the DAD in the future – in both the self-study and by faculty in person – is encouraging to hear. Additionally, the reviewer agrees with a more frequent self-assessment for the program, and would recommend something done internally every two years, due to the frequent nature of technology (and thus, curricular) changes in the discipline. An external review, such as this one, every 5-8 years, is also a positive continued element to the institutional review protocol.

Finally, regarding program accreditation, it has been clear through the self-study and interviews on campus, that pursuing accreditation by NASAD is of interest – and perhaps a goal or priority – of the DAD BS. The reviewer has listed a few notes on this below, to be considered before moving forward:

- *Facilities* – The 3D foundations room, the sound studio(s), and what is currently being called the "film studio" will likely trigger NASAD Standards Compliance Issues, regarding safety, occupancy, and dedicated space for the specializations. Additionally, overscheduled labs and large class sizes, namely in the Animation Lab in Beacom Hall, could also be non-compliance issues.

- *Curriculum* – NASAD may find Standards Compliance issues with the current BS degree, due to it requiring such an excessive amount of art/design related courses for a bachelor's degree.

- *Institutional Accreditation* - NASAD is a unique accrediting body, as they do not actually accredit a program, but instead an institution (like HLC). This means that any art or design-related discipline on campus falls under their purview. This reviewer believes that the DSU Game Design program might fall under NASAD purview, most specifically the narrative and game art tracks. It is recommended that conversations begin with that program immediately, regarding the collaborative writing of the self-study and subsequent hosting of the site evaluation visit.

- *Consultant* – it is highly suggested that a university considering going up for accreditation with NASAD have a consultant visit campus, at least one - but ideally two - years in advance of the official visit. This will be a "dry run" for all faculty and administration, to best prepare for the official visit. A full draft of the NASAD self-study (which is likely about five to ten times the length and complexity of the current DAD self-study) should be sent to the consultant at least one month before the visit.

- *Student Work* - A fairly significant portion of the site visit – arguably the most important part – is the viewing of student work samples. During this reviewer's visit, only a small sampling of student work, as well as a link to a short demo reel, seemed to be available during the visit. The ability to fully assess the effectiveness of the curriculum is quite difficult without seeing a wide-range of portfolio examples. On this note, it is suggested that multiple works from every single class in the DAD begin to be collected in expectation of a NASAD visit (including a consultant visit). In addition to traditional work hung in in person, a library of digital work can also be displayed and archived for further viewing, post-visit. It is recommended that the university invest in a multi-terabyte cloud-based storage plan for the DAD to begin archiving work for accreditation purposes.

Student support / student enrollments
- Student recruitment efforts
- Student enrollment numbers
- Student graduation rates and student placement
- Student support services
- Academic advising

Regarding Student support and enrollments, the reviewer did receive some data and spoke extensively with students, as well as read through the information in the self-study. The following was observed:

- *There was little to no evidence of what sort of recruitment plan the university has for DAD students.* As mentioned previously, it is strongly suggested that the university consider incorporating DAD into more of both the creation of visual materials to represent the institution and the actual marketing of the program to prospective students.

- *The enrollment numbers in the program – overall – seem extremely healthy. But upon diving deeper into each discipline, it was discovered that there is a severe imbalance between specialties.* While Animation looks to currently be the healthiest area (with Computer Graphics close behind in numbers), the Film and Sound areas had very concerning numbers, especially in the former. It is suggested that the university look closely at the viability of the low-enrolled programs, especially regarding its mission and goals, the cost of equipment and facilities, and how it is training students for the industry.

- *If specializations are to continue to be offered, enrollment balance across disciplines is something that could potentially be achieved by establishing portfolio requirements, perhaps after the first year.* This will allow DAD to manage enrollment numbers equally in different specializations, thus also allowing DAD to control class sizes in future courses (i.e.: to avoid bloat in certain courses/areas). This is also a perfect opportunity to initiate something like this with the University's upcoming goal to push towards being a more "selective" recruiting institution.

- *Regarding student graduation rates and placement, the former of these was extremely concerning to the reviewer.* The low percentages of students to graduate – even in six years – appeared to be a place for potential

improvement in the DAD program. While the numbers were not much different than the institution's, it still provides an opportunity for DAD to be a leader in this area by improving things. It is the reviewer's opinion that this low graduation rate could be improved through two initiatives:

- *Establishment of a portfolio requirement* for entrance to the program in the 1st/2nd year.
- *Significant reduction of required courses in the DAD BS, and perhaps even the removal of specializations.*

The placement rates seemed good and found most of the graduates finding positions that were mainly in the region, at small to medium-sized companies.

The reviewer also had a chance to speak with about ten students who were representing all four specializations in the program. As DSU is a student-centered, teaching institution, the reviewer takes comments and feedback from students extremely seriously, and felt it important to include feedback in the report. The reviewer asked several questions of the students and gained valuable insight about their reasons for their initial interest in DAD, the strengths of the program, and the weaknesses. Below is a short, bulleted summary of those quoted responses:

Reason for initial interest and eventual attendance at DSU/DAD?
- Due to affordability and proximity
- Smaller than big state schools
- Student to prof ratio and small class sizes
- Tech-based mission
- Faculty hired in last four years have industry experience

In your opinion, what is a highlight of the DAD program?
- Really like some of the faculty
- Instructors provide a freedom of creativity
- Faculty are very supportive one on one
- Clubs associated with majors
- Industry standard software

In your opinion, what is a weakness of the DAD program?
- DAD needs its own building – everything is currently spread across campus
- CS & Cyber get too much attention
- No presence of DAD on campus

- Unnecessary classes like film editing, digital storytelling, and photoshop/illustrator (class taught from a book – we could do that ourselves)
- Major courses don't start until Junior year
- Computer Graphics Major doesn't prepare you as a designer
- Poor equipment, especially Film and Audio.
- Class sizes are too big, especially after DSU said otherwise when recruiting
- Faculty are too easy on them – be more constructive and critical
- Don't like the specializations – they feel separated from each other
- They don't feel prepared for industry
- You have to be driven to learn, as you won't get it in class
- Other degrees have the tech that DAD needs, like 3D printing and drones for photo/cinema

The final question asked of the students was *"if you could go back to when you were 17 years old, would you do the same thing and join the DAD major and the same specialization?"* Out of the ten students in the room, eight of the students said they would not come to DSU if they could do it over again. Although that is difficult to hear, the reviewer felt it important to note that some serious consideration and consultation with the students, about the current and future state of the program, should be undertaken in the coming months and years.

Program Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Strength #1: The DAD BS is unique to DSU and region and has a forward-thinking legacy. The creation of an art and design degree to be heavily focused on digital technology goes quite well with the DSU mission. The faculty are commended for being visionaries in their field 20 years ago with the Multimedia/Web Development BS, and again visionary with the DAD being established 12 years ago. It is clear that the faculty hired within roughly the past five years possess this same visionary energy and aspiration and will likely be leaders in forming the next stage in the DAD's curricular lifespan.

Strength #2: The DAD's blending of technology – both the "Traditional" and "Digital" is commended. It is the recommendation that the faculty will take a more vocal approach – both to the students in their curricula and to the administration – regarding how all elements of the DAD, from charcoal to mouse – is valued technology.

Strength #3: The DAD faculty are well-liked by the students. This was cited as one of the students' favorite parts about the program. The students enjoyed the one-on-one

interactions with faculty members, and the supportive nature of the freedom of creativity that the faculty offer to the students.

Improvement Area #1: There is clear need for Facilities & Equipment Support in the DAD program. *This was the most common "weakness" noted by faculty and students interviewed during the site visit,* and also observed by the reviewer during the campus tour.

Improvement Area #2: The curriculum for the DAD BS is far too rigorous and disparate. Due to the size of the faculty, facilities, and regional focus of the institution, the amount of credits and numerous specializations could be a strong reason for oversubscription of facilities, teaching overloads, lack of resource support, and graduation rates.

Improvement Area #3: There appears to be a serious lack of faculty community amongst the DAD program, which is affecting the students as well. Likely due – in part – to four very separate specializations (which includes curriculum, expertise, and facilities), there appeared to be little semblance of program-wide collaboration or dedication. This also became obvious during the site visit when a large majority of the faculty had admitted to not reading the self-study and the reviewer observed that roughly half of the faculty seemed engaged in the campus visit and review, while the other half did not.

Specific issues identified by the university: program curriculum, program assessment, and program enrollments

For all three of the above-requested issues identified by the university, please see the previously-covered areas about curriculum, assessment, and enrollments.

PART 4: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

General Comments

As discussed previously, the reviewer recommends the two following general comments for consideration in future changes, and will dive deeper into both – as well as others - within the more specific recommendations to follow:

- *Facilities*. The current state of facilities for the DAD program is not only imbalanced regarding support and attention, but in some cases, unacceptable and unsafe. This area deems a very heavy and immediate focus of attention and resources by the university.

- *Curriculum*. The curricular structure in its current state is far too rigorous and specialized for a BS at a regional institution like DSU. Continued and dedicated time and energy should be put into visioning for the future, while consulting current – and past – students for feedback.

Note: Due to the Focus Areas for Review and Issues Identified by the University overlapping, those two below sections for specific recommendations have been combined.

Specific recommendations – both organized by focus areas for review and relative to issues identified by the university

Program goals and strategic planning
The reviewer believes that the program goals outlined (Curricular Revisions, Selective Admissions, and future NASAD accreditation) are solid, and since these goals overlap with other portions of the self-study, the recommendations associated with these will fall under those specific below areas.

Program resources
Teaching Overloads. It is the recommendation of the reviewer that the university investigates and corrects the issues of teaching overloads that seem to be common in the DAD area. As a reminder, studio/lab-based courses have credit to student contact hours that are around double that of any lecture-based credit to contact hours on campus. To have an instructor teaching over 18 hours per week in the classroom will lead to high faculty turnover and resentment, as well as potential loss or denial of accreditation for the institution.

Program Coordinator. The current responsibilities and expectations of the Program Coordinator (PC) appears to be impeding the ability to develop leadership and community within the DAD program. The PC has no supervisory or evaluation duties yet is expected to lead faculty, meetings and curricular change. To have that authority seated with the College Dean position creates an odd leadership structure that makes change and authority more difficult. Additionally, the position lacks the proper resources necessary to be successful. The PC should not only have a stipend (as it currently does), but a course release each semester to focus on curricular change, accreditation, student advising, prospective recruitment, and other duties that arise in such a crucial position.

Faculty. Significant time and attention should be directed at supporting the culture and community of the faculty in the DAD program. In addition to a revisioning of the curriculum and program coordinator position, it is suggested that the DAD consider forming standing committees and bylaws (if not already present). Things such as a Publicity/Marketing Committee, Curriculum Committee, and Facilities Committee seem like perfect and timely opportunities for such a large entity on campus.

Facilities. The DAD facilities have several recommendations for change, moving forward.
- *Single Location.* First and foremost, it is recommended that the university prioritize a singular, shared space for all DAD programs and faculty to use and have their "home". This includes studios/classrooms, offices, and other program-specific facilities. Like spokes on a wheel, and the central hub being that collaboration space, the DAD program will need this to continue to survive as a program.
- Secondly, certain facilities are in dire need of attention, repair, and updating. The three most egregious areas are as follows:
    - *3D Design Workshop/Classroom and Woodshop*. As stated earlier, this area is not only in need of updating, but currently very unsafe. It is recommended that the university find resources to support the replacement and updating of multiple parts of this facility, especially regarding ventilation and the updating of industrial machinery (woodshop equipment and kiln). This area is a crucial element to the DAD program and serves as the (literal) foundation upon which the rest of the BS is built. Without a strong foundation in Drawing, 2D, and 3D Design, the rest of the program suffers.

- o *Film and Cinematic Arts* Studio. Currently housed in an empty, generic, and oddly shaped room in Beagle's 3rd floor, the Film and Cinematic Arts studio needs extensive renovations – or perhaps a move to an entirely new space. Additionally, new equipment will need to be purchased to support the changes in technology for this specialization.
- o *Digital Sound Production.* Like the above, the Digital Sound Production program is in spaces not meant to be classrooms or laboratories. This area needs to be moved to a more dedicated location (ideally in proximity to the other DAD programs). Additionally, new equipment will need to be purchased to support the changes in technology for this specialization.

Other Resource Recommendations. A few other observations and recommendations, in the area of resources, are as follows:
- *Fees*. It appears that there is some differential between the ART and ARTD/DAD course fees. It is recommended that this area be looked at as one potential way for improving previously stated issues in facilities. While the reviewer agrees that digital technology is both costly and frequently changing, traditional technology, such as a kiln or photography enlarger, also can be quite costly and requires updating.
- *Marketing*. The reviewer recommends that the DAD program make a stronger effort to embed itself into the DSU marketing pipeline. This may take the form of student workers/interns, faculty serving on committees, or other creative and visual ways to advertise the program, both on and off-campus.

Program curriculum
Revisions to the DAD BS. It is the recommendation of the reviewer that the DAD faculty, college, and university strongly consider the idea of replacing the current DAD BS major that has four individual specializations with a singular, general DAD BS Major (without specializations). This would involve the transformation of the current specializations into complimentary – yet of course optional – minors (of which all are conveniently already present as minors). By raising the current DAD 45-credit core to around 60-70 credits and dropping the specialization, it will open the major up to about 20 free credits. This will bring the major more in line with a typical bachelor's program, and allow for more options to pursue the above-mentioned minors, as well as the flexibility to work with transfer students and those on campus who are looking to double-major. *See pgs. 10-11 for a list of issues currently existing in the program that could also be potentially solved with this significant revision.*

Revisions to the DAD POS. It is recommended to revise the Plan of Study to limit studio courses to no more than three in one semester, due to their extended (double) length as compared to other classes on campus. There is also reason to believe by the reviewer that this rigorous schedule – and above-mentioned degree requirements - might be a reason for low retention and graduation rates within the DAD program.

Game Design. The reviewer was surprised to find that there was not more collaboration – and ownership – with the Game Design BS. DAD is currently acting as a significant service arm of that successful program and should consider taking half of the ownership of the program, to be shared between Computer Science and DAD. Consider how all four specializations could play a part in the animation, 3D, sound, identity, and cinematics of that program.

Technology integration
It is recommended that the DAD faculty begin to refer to *all* equipment in their courses as technology, regardless of the digital – or analog – nature of the media. Additionally, infusing this language into the curriculum itself, by potentially revising course documents and objectives in traditional foundation courses, could be advantageous.

Also, the use of the acronym "STEAM" should be very present on a campus like DSU, but the reviewer did not hear anyone, beyond one DAD faculty member, mentioned it. The potential for collaboration is strong, especially given the size of the DAD program in relation to the rest of the on-campus STEM population. It is recommended that the word be incorporated into the faculty and student lexicon, just as "technology" was suggested earlier.

Program assessment
NASAD. If the DAD program does in fact decide to pursue NASAD accreditation, several issues will need to be addressed, many of which are outlined in this overall recommendation section. Please see pgs. 12-13 for a list of those suggestions.

Internal Assessment. The review of portfolios –at a midpoint and upon exit, would benefit the program. Additionally, it is suggested that a mid-point portfolio review can be a helpful factor for the review of faculty and curriculum, and how certain classes are being taught, and by whom. The exit portfolio review is often effective to have viewed and evaluated by advisory boards and alumni.

Student support / student enrollments

Admissions Portfolio Review. It is recommended that a portfolio requirement not be associated with the first-year admissions portion, but instead perhaps at the end of the first year, to allow for class and specialization/minor enrollment balancing. The specializations appeared to be severely imbalanced, so again, whether a revision to the DAD BS happens or some other enrollment management tool is implemented, this is a problem area that needs addressing.

Graduation Rates. These percentages – even at the five and six-year graduation rate, were surprisingly low. It is recommended that by creating a less-rigorous DAD BS, combined with a potential portfolio review, would result in higher graduation rates for the DAD over time.

In summation, this program has quite a lot to be proud of, especially regarding its history as an innovative and creative player in technology, at a primarily STEM-focused university. The main areas for potential improvement are most definitely found in facilities and curriculum, and it will take a serious and agreed-upon collaborative commitment from the faculty, the college, and the university to help bring the Digital Arts and Design Bachelor of Science to the level of success and support that it truly deserves at Dakota State University.